"GROUPS" IN MALAY SOCIETY

by Ronald Provencher

Social scientists usually assume that groups are the primary units of social structure in any society and that networks comprise an intermediate level linking groups with individual interaction. This article discusses the inadequacy of group theory and network theory for understanding social behavior in loosely structured societies such as Malay society, and examines alternative modes of analysis—categories of identity, centric definition of aggregates, systems of courtesy, and behavioral regions.

KEY WORDS: Malay society, group theory, loosely structured societies, interaction.

GROUP SOCIOLOGY

Structural sociologists and social anthropologists have theories of society which emphasize the significance of groups. Even when they define their fields of inquiry, they usually refer to groups (Olmsted 1959 and Boissevain 1968). "Groupness" is an assumed quality of society. Only the intensity of that quality, represented by a dichotomy such as "reference" and "corporate" groups, is usually examined with respect to a given society. Society itself is viewed as having group-like closure in which institutions dovetail with each other to form an integrated, "harmonious," whole (Fallers 1955). The pervasiveness of group sociology is manifest in macro and micro levels of social analysis.

At the macro level of analysis, the standard dichotomy between "primary" and "secondary" groups has been the basis for distinctions between kinds of societies (Olmsted 1959). The most thorough and famous of analytical dichotomies based on differences between primary and secondary groups are the work of Tonnies (*gemeinschaft* versus *gesellschaft*), Maine (status versus contract), and Redfield (rural versus urban). These analytic dichotomies are strongly associated. "Primary group," "gemeinschaft," "status," and "folk" evoke similar images of society which contrast with those evoked by "secondary group," "gesellschaft," "contract," and "urban."

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One imagines that these terms might be normally interchangeable items of a word association test for postulants to professorship in social science.

At the micro level of analysis, the assumed importance of groups is often less obvious. It is perhaps more insidious. For example, conceptions of social behavior in social psychology and sociometry, two fields more obviously concerned with the individual than with the group as a focus of inquiry, often equate "social behavior" with "behavior within the context of a group" (Lana 1969). This equation of "social" with "group" seriously affects perception and explanation of behavioral conformity of individuals in societies where persistent groups are not important features of structure. The apparent "loose structure" of Thai society is a famous instance of this problematic equation (Evers 1969).

Yoblonsky (1959) and Boissevain (1968) have noted "the group fulfilling prophecy" whereby groups are created through sociological analysis. This "act of creation" recurs because Western social scientists believe groups are the building blocks of larger society and the relevant environments for individual behavior. When groups are analytical creations and they are misperceived as empirical experience, they may constitute unconscious and untested assumptions concerning social behavior.

I suggest that group sociology has been derived from Western European folk tradition, much elaborated into a great tradition by a very select literati. Group sociology has been the conceptual basis of broad scale description and analysis of complex societies, a matter of long term interest to sociologists. But its effectiveness as a conceptual basis has been less adequate when experiential data have been intensive and rich, as in the holistic studies of poor or alienated segments of urban society.

Group sociology has been adequate, generally, for the translation of experience in non-Western societies into systematic models easily comprehended by Westerners. There has been much more controversy, however, over appropriate social structural models for non-Western than for Western societies. This difference resides in quality rather than quantity of perception of social data. Western cognitive biases are more effective perceptual frames in Western than in non-Western contexts. But group sociology has been basic to the intensive description and analysis of the small-scale societies which traditionally hold such fascination for anthropologists. As an analytical framework, it has been more effective with smaller, more simple societies. This better "fit" of social experience in simpler societies with structural models derived from group sociology may be viewed as an outcome of multiple involvements of the same limited number of individuals in a limited universe of types of social situations. It is not necessarily a confirmation of the natural, historical, or logical primacy of "group" as a unit of sociological analysis. In any case, group sociology has been much less effective as a conceptual basis for social anthropologists involved in the intensive description and structural analysis of complex non-Western societies.

Group sociology has been an effective mode of analysis in some instances, but its popularity may partially depend on another factor. I suspect that group sociology has been ideologically satisfying to most Western social scientists. Western utopian models of society, generally, luxuriate in "real groups." Exceptional utopian models seethe with anarchistic revulsion to groups of any kind; but they are anti-social exceptions which prove the rule. Part of what makes savages and folk "noble" is the expectation that they live in societies which are structured by "real groups." Part of our reticence, as social anthropologists, to study "modern" or "urban" people is the expectation that they live in societies which are to some extent "disorganized," i.e., not thoroughly structured by "real groups."

Group sociology has failed as a conceptual framework in only a few instances. But the failures are significant. Social scientists are like other scientists in being committed to the discovery of regularity and system in experience. How paradoxical it is that social scientists have discovered societies which are "disorganized," "disharmonious," or "loosely structured." It is, of course, ludicrous to fault particular societies, saying that they lack regularity and system. An inadequate explanatory system is to blame. In effect, hypotheses (however casually constructed) derived from group sociology have been disproved. It is not that some societies lack regularity and structure; but that group sociology is an inadequate basis for describing the systems of such societies.

LOOSELY STRUCTURED SOCIETIES

Societies which have been described as disorganized, disharmonious, and loosely structured probably do not constitute a single type. My purpose here is to consider only one such society and to inspect the adequacy of group sociology for describing its regularities and system.

To a Western observer, a loosely structured social system is one in which behavior seems overly individualistic and lacking in such characteristics of a tightly structured society as discipline, binding filial piety, administrative regularity, and business ethics (Embree 1950:182-184). A loosely structured society is one in which the individual may be highly motivated to conform while in the direct presence of others but is rarely motivated to sustain conformity after face-to-face encounter has ended (Phillips 1965:79). It is a society in which kinship groups are weak and localized communities are poorly defined (Wijeyewardene 1967:69).

Descriptions of Thai society dominate the substance of professional literature on loose structure (e.g., Embree 1949 and 1950; Evers 1969; Hanks 1962; Moerman 1965; Mosel 1957; Phillips 1965; Wijeyewardene 1967; and Wilson 1962). Other societies constitute obvious examples, including many urban sub-societies characterized by sociologists as being "disorganized" and

several African and New Guinean societies which have been described as having "flexibility" and "plasticity" (Oliver 1965 and Kaberry 1967).

West Coast Malay society is loosely structured in approximately the same sense, although perhaps not to the same degree, that Thai society is loosely structured. Swift (1965:167-174), writing about Malay peasants in Jelebu, notes the weakness of traditional groupings, lack of any clear system of legitimate authority, the contingent character of economic bargains, and situational variation in the rights and obligations of kinship ties. Wilson (1967) notes similar themes in the social life of rural Malay villagers in Jendram. Loose structure is a feature of urban Malay society, if Singapore (Djamour 1959) and Kuala Lumpur (McGee 1967, Provencher 1971 and 1972, and S. Husin Ali 1968) are typical instances. In fact, urban Malay society appears to be more loosely structured than its rural counterpart while maintaining many features which are at least as "traditional" as corresponding features in rural village society. These remarks refer specifically to West Coast Malays.

URBAN-RURAL COMPARISON

Social contexts in Kuala Lumpur differ from those of surrounding rural areas in ways which allow insights into two characteristic features of loosely structured social systems—situational conformity and quasi-group formation. Perception of contextual and structural contrasts was enhanced during the fieldwork period, from September 1964 to December 1965, through "the method of controlled comparison" (Eggan 1954) or "micro-ethnology" (Fischer 1968). Experience with the range of variation in different West Coast Malay localities consisted of brief (one to three days) visits to rural and urban Malay localities in the Malaysian states of Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Malacca, Johore, and Singapore. Two localities, well within the extremes represented by other rural and urban localities, were selected for intensive study.

Kampong Bahru, the urban locality, is in Kuala Lumpur. Kuang, the rural locality, is approximately twenty miles northwest of Kuala Lumpur. The two localities are related in many ways. Some of the earliest inhabitants of both came from a third locality, Gombak, which is just northeast of Kuala Lumpur. A majority of inhabitants in both localities are Sumatrans or descendents of Sumatrans who migrated to the Malay Peninsula to participate in the rubber and tin boom at the beginning of this century. During the Japanese occupation of Malaya, many Kampong Bahru residents fled to Kuang to escape starvation and trouble in the city. During the civil war, from 1948 through 1959, many Kuang residents fled to Kampong Bahru to escape food shortages and rebels in the countryside. Some Kuang residents participate in the weekly market at Kampong Bahru. And many have relatives and friends and acquaintances in the other

locality. Culturally, the two localities are very similar, so that structural differences may be seen as the result of other circumstances.

In order to control comparison further, a small territorial segment was chosen for very intensive study in each locality. Comparable population size, important for perception of differences in demographic variables, was the major basis for selecting these two local segments; but in both instances "natural" territories (*kawasan*) representing the mid-range of structural and demographic features of the larger rural and urban localities were chosen. The urban territory consisted of 185 households with a total of 1003 inhabitants on 12½ contiguous acres of residential land; and the rural territory consisted of 181 households with a total of 1033 inhabitants on approximately 125 scattered acres of residential land interspersed with rubber and fruit tree orchards, wet-rice paddies, dry-crop cultivations, and fallow land.

In terms of Mitchell's (1966) "demographic imperatives," variables which are supposed to represent the most basic environmental differences between urban and rural localities, Kampong Bahru and Kuang are very different. These demographic imperatives include: (1) population density; (2) economic differentiation; (3) social and geographic mobility; (4) demographic disproportion of age and sex groups; and (5) population heterogeneity.

Population density on residential land is about ten times greater in Kampong Bahru than Kuang. Also, households in the urban locality are more equidistantly spaced than households in Kuang. The rural households tend to occur in widely separated clusters consisting of four or five single household dwellings.

Economic differentiation is much greater in the city. Office workers, businessmen, salesmen, police, armed services personnel, technicians, mechanics, drivers, hospital attendants, teachers, and factory workers live in Kampong Bahru. Inhabitants of Kuang are engaged mostly in three varieties of agricultural labor: wet-rice cultivation, rubber-tapping, and fruit growing. Urban inhabitants leave their locality to work in many different places. Rural workers remain within their locality. Moreover, household renting divides the urban inhabitants into two distinct categories, owners and renters. Owners and renters both perceive renters as outsiders. Owners barely outnumber renters and there are more renter than owner households. Approximately sixty percent of all households in the urban locality are renter households. In the rural community, where tenancy is based on symbiotic rather than buy-and-sell relationships, tenants are perceived as having full status as residents of the locality. And although the roles of owner and tenant are well defined, many individuals and most households are involved in both owner and tenant statuses. Finally, sexual division of labor is more apparent in the urban setting.

Only one-seventh of urban workers are female, whereas females constitute about one-third of the work force in the rural area.

Geographic mobility is much greater in Kampong Bahru, the urban setting, than in Kuang. Owners move hardly more often than inhabitants of Kuang, but urban renters move frequently. For example, during a six-month period, about forty percent of the renter household spaces in the intensively studied urban territory changed hands. Social mobility is easier and more frequent in the city, too. Urban inhabitants have easier access to education and well-paying occupations. Urban owners, with "surpluses" derived from household rental, can most easily afford status-raising activities such as pilgrimage to Mecca, secondary education, and frequent and elaborate ritual feast giving.

There is more subethnic heterogeneity in Kampong Bahru than in Kuang. This greater heterogeneity is mostly among renters. They have come to the capital city from every state in the Federation of Malaysia. They seek and obtain residence wherever there is available household space. They have not settled in subethnic enclaves. To some extent, they have helped to break up previous subethnic enclaves among the owners. There is less heterogeneity represented in the birthplaces of Kuang residents. Subethnic enclaves are a bit more apparent in the rural locality.

These demographic contrasts between Kampong Bahru and Kuang summarize basic differences in urban and rural contexts of Malay social behavior. Immediately, of course, the demographic qualities of a social setting affect individual behavior. What is more important here, variations in the group-like quality of urban and rural aggregations of individuals are eventually attributable to these demographic contrasts.

ETHNIC "GROUP" IDENTITY IN KAMPONG BAHRU AND KUANG

In the Malay language, the word for "race" or "ethnic group" is *bangsa*. The elegant expansion of this root to *kebangsaan* aggrandizes the referent category to intend "national" or "nationality." Both words refer to categories rather than to persons, and both words connote behavioral rather than physical attributes. *Kebangsaan Malaysia* ("Malaysian") for example, indicates the same broad sort of aggregation as "American." Malays, Chinese, Indians, and Europeans may be "Malaysians." *Bangsa Melayu* ("Malays") is more narrowly defined, but any person is Malay who is Moslem and who speaks and behaves like a Malay. A Malay is someone who behaves in accordance with *adat*—customary manners and law.

Many former Chinese and some former Indians and Europeans have become Malays through conversion to Islam and residence in a Malay locality. The most common conversion of non-Malays to Malay status is through the adoption of Chinese female children (cf. Djamour 1959, Firth

1943, and Swift 1965). Intermarriage with Chinese, Indians, Aborigines, and Europeans is the other common situation of conversion.

Momentarily, adopted Chinese children are referred to as *anak beli* "bought child." Usually a few days old at the time of their sale, they become Malay as easily as the natural children of Malays. Most have progenitors from South China and their physical appearance is not sufficiently outside the range of West Coast Malay physical types to make them especially distinct. Given the Malay emphasis on behavior as a validation of ethnicity, their "Chinese" appearance is not very important, anyway. Chinese girls rather than boys are preferred, relating to the usual Malay preference for a girl as the first child and to Malay ideals of feminine beauty which include light skin color. Male infants left by Chinese rebels during the civil war were commonly adopted by Malays.

Non-Malays convert to Islam when they marry Malays. Islamic law allows Jewish and Christian brides to retain their religion, but requires bridegrooms to become Moslem. Malays allow no exception. Malays do not marry non-Moslems. Indian Moslem males are probably the most frequent converts to Malay status through marriage. Chinese females are next most frequent as converts through marriage. The conversion of Aborigines through intermarriage is probably quite frequent in some areas of Malaya (cf. Wilson 1967 and Denton 1968), but there were no instances of Malay intermarriage with Aborigines in Kuang, and only one instance in Kampong Bahru. In instances of intermarriage of Malays with Chinese, Indians, and Aborigines, the couples almost always settle in a Malay village or neighborhood. This is rarely true in cases of intermarriage between Malays and Europeans. In Kampong Bahru, many inhabitants mentioned that one of their relatives had married an English person, but such relatives were almost always then living in England or a European section of a Malaysian city. There was one former European, a woman born in Portugal, living in Kampong Bahru at the time of the research. And there was another former European, a man born in Ireland, living in Kuang. Both had married into high ranking Malay families.

The importance of being Malay in contrast to being something else is probably somewhat more frequently experienced by inhabitants of Kampong Bahru than by inhabitants of Kuang. Kuala Lumpur is as overwhelmingly Chinese in the demographic sense as it is overwhelmingly Malay in the sense of national-cosmological symbolism. The public media carry government policy announcements and news items about Malayness to both urban and rural inhabitants. But these messages have more pertinence to the daily lives of urban Malays who more often compete with non-Malays (especially Chinese) for positions in school, business, civil service, and politics. The effect is intensified because situations of competition are usually outside the Malay residential locality.

Rural Malay cognizance of their own ethnicity is most often in situations of contrast with Chinese, too. But the rural situation is rarely, if ever, one of competition. There, relationships between Chinese and Malays are transactional. Kuang Malays sell produce to and buy certain manufactured items from Chinese entrepreneurs who live in Kuala Lumpur and travel to Kuang only for business. Chinese enter an entirely Malay situation. The Chinese collect rubber from their Malay dealers who reside in Kuang and they wholesale goods to Malay shopkeepers. The average Kuang inhabitant has even less business contact with Chinese than have urban Malays.

Malayness in the sense of involvement in traditional courtesy is more frequently experienced by Kampong Bahru residents than by Kuang residents (Provencher 1971 and 1972). More of the urban residents can afford to furnish their ritual feasts with all the traditional trimmings. Ritual feasts are more frequent and have more guests in the city. Ritual feasts are optimal occasions for formal traditional behavior. Additionally, high residential mobility and other factors affect acquaintanceship in the urban locality. Frequently, Kampong Bahru residents do not know each other and must interact in the formal, most noticeably Malay style. Even informal Malay interaction routines are more apparent in the urban than in the rural locality, because aural and optical boundaries of backregions are less secure in the crowded city. Traditional behaviors of a neighboring household's backregion are more available as comparative validation of the backregion behavior of one's own household. Behavioral identity as a Malay is more thorough in the city than in the country.

Malays sometimes use *bangsa* to refer to subethnic identities (see Wilson 1967:23 and 35-36). But the usage is not entirely common. Malays of Minangkabau descent use the term *suku bangsa.* Their usage is half in jest, comparing the subethnic varieties of Malays to the exogamous matriclans of the Minangkabau.

In everyday usage, West Coast Malays rarely distinguish different levels of ethnicity. They note categories as these apply to situational descriptions of particular persons. The linguistic formula employed to note these qualities is "orang-_____" or "_____-person." Examples include:

dia orang Melaka—"he is a Malacca person"

dia orang Minangkabau—"she is a Minangkabau person"

dia orang Melayu—"he is a Malay person"

dia orang puteh—"she is a white (English) person"

dia orang sewa—"he is a renter"

dia orang punya—"she is an owner."

Kuang and Kampong Bahru residents employ the same utterance formula

to note other, seemingly more personal, characteristics, as follows:

dia orang gemok—"she is a fat person"

dia orang baik hati—"he is a kind person"

dia orang pandai—"she is a clever person."

In addition to "Indonesian" identities (such as Achehnese, Buginese, Boyanese, Javanese, Mandiling, and Minangkabau), West Coast Malays recognize differences between Malays from different states of the Malay Peninsula. These differences are mostly linguistic, involving minor and mutually intelligible shifts in vowel sounds and in the frequencies of some words.

Subethnic identities have implications for personal rank in Kuang and Kampong Bahru. In Kampong Bahru, Malacca Malays were the first to occupy house lots on the highest, most desirable land. Javanese settlers came soon afterwards, but occupied lower, poorly drained land. Minangkabaus occupied the land in the middle. Elevation and status were coincident. The high rank of Malacca Malays may have resulted in part from their pioneer status. Later arrival of Minangkabaus and Javanese may account, in part, for their lower ranks. But the ranking of these three subethnic identities is also an aspect of relative Malayness. Because of their distinctive language and *adat* ("customary law"), the Javanese were legally distinguished from other Malays until 1935. The Minangkabaus are perceived as merely odd because of the matrilineal emphasis of their customary law (*adat perpateh*). Malacca Malays, on the other hand, are closely identified with a famous Malay empire of the recent past.

Subethnic ranking in Kuang differs somewhat from that of Kampong Bahru. The Minangkabaus enjoy high rank because they pioneered the area. The Javanese are viewed as only marginally Malay; and other identities, such as Korinchi, have no special rank other than being lower than the Minangkabaus and higher than the Javanese.

Kampong Bahru and Kuang inhabitants, I should emphasize, concern themselves with the ranking of subethnic identities for purposes of ranking individuals rather than aggregates. Subethnic identity is potentially a situational variable. Most adults are aware of and control the performance of custom beyond their habitual practice. Many can speak at least one dialect other than their own and can caricature several others. A single individual may claim several subethnic identities, each in its appropriate situation, through ability to perform the characteristic behavior and through claim of close association or of affinal or distant consanguineal relationship.

One outstanding performance of this sort was by an affinal relative of a prominent shopkeeper in Kampong Bahru. The shopkeeper, of Minangkabau descent, agreed to marry a Minangkabau girl living in Negri Sem-

bilan. The engagement ceremony and the first portion of the marriage ceremony were to be in the girl's locality. Minangkabau *adat* was to be observed. The shopkeeper needed a *mamak* ("mother's brother") to act as his spokesman at the ceremonial proceedings; but he had no actual *mamak* to play the part. His mother's sister's husband, a man of Javanese birth and descent, agreed to play the role. His performance of the role required considerable knowledge of Minangkabau custom, dialect, and folklore. He mastered the role in a few weeks. Even the elders of the bride's community received his performance with enthusiasm. This "Javanese" man assumed the Negri Sembilan Minangkabau dialect and defeated his counterparts, *mamaks* and elder female relatives of the bride, in the stylized verbal bargaining during the engagement ceremony and in the *pantun* exchange (verbal dueling in poetry) during the first portion of the marriage ceremony.

Most performances of subethnic identity are not this complex. In Kampong Bahru, Selangor Malay is spoken by almost all. Most inhabitants speak Selangor Malay within their households, even when their native regional dialect is different. When they are conversing with others who have the same subethnic identity but who are not members of the same household, one hears the distinctive sounds of subethnic dialect. Also, at *makan besar*s, small "formal dinners" given to celebrate more-or-less secular events such as a job promotion or a business success, the host and a number of the guests frequently have the same subethnic identity. Other guests are often drawn into performing the ethnic identity of the host.

Situational aspects of subethnicity are less apparent in the rural village, Kuang. Native subethnic dialects other than Selangor dialect dominate verbal exchange within households. This is probably related to fewer inter-subethnic marriages and greater subethnic homogeneity of residential clusters in Kuang. Some occasions in which subethnicity tends to be a theme of verbal play, such as the *makan besar*, occur much less frequently than in the city. There are frequent opportunities during the day, however, for persons of different subethnic identity to interact. On those occasions they sometimes use Selangor dialect just as they would vis à vis a Malay stranger. Sometimes they assume a common subethnic dialect proper to at least one of the participants. Most commonly, however, each speaks his own dialect.

Not all subethnic Malay identities are weakly bounded. The Javanese identity (*orang jawa*) in Kuang and Kampong Bahru implies more definite ethnicity than any other. It is more like ethnic identity in the West. As part of the special mode of interaction that is Javanese, local Javanese share exclusive involvement through a language not intelligible to other Malays, exchange networks of special ritual feasts (*selamatan*), exclusive prayer-house membership (in Kuang), and membership in Javanese cultural

associations (in Kampong Bahru). But these dimensions of group identity are not unqualified. Virtually all who speak Javanese also speak at least one dialect of Malay. Many who claim Javanese identity are not fluent in Javanese and merely enrich their Malay with a Javanese accent and occasional Javanese words. While the Javanese *selamatan* differs in detail from the Malay *makan besar* and *khenduri* it is very similar, and it is to some extent subsumed by the category of *khenduri selamatan* in the Malay taxonomy of feasts. Guests of Javanese *selamatan* are almost always Javanese. But Javanese participate in Malay *makan besar* and *khenduri.* The Javanese in Kuang have their own prayer-house but there is no exclusively Javanese prayer-house in Kampong Bahru. This may be coincident with the residential near-exclusiveness of Javanese in Kuang and the massive interspersal of non-Javanese in the formerly exclusive Javanese area of Kampong Bahru. Most Javanese in Kuang do not belong to the state-wide Javanese cultural association. Some Javanese in Kampong Bahru do belong. However, membership in the Kampong Bahru chapter of the state-wide Selangor Javanese Association is open in the sense that some members are Javanese only by friendship, affinal relationship, or very distant consanguineal relationship. The only interest of the Association beyond cultural affairs is sports, especially *sepak raga,* a Malay version of netball.

The term *orang Minangkabau* is the only other subethnic term that implies strong ethnicity. If Minangkabaus in Kuang and Kampong Bahru practiced their traditional matrilineal customary law (*adat perpateh*), they would constitute a group as exclusive as the Javanese. But they follow the customary law of other Malays (*adat temenggong*). In Kuang, there is a series of almost exclusively Minangkabau residential clusters in one hamlet, Wilayah Kampong Gombak. But there is no explicitly Minangkabau formal organization associated with this phenomenon. There are no exclusively Minangkabau residential clusters in Kampong Bahru. Urban Minangkabaus founded several athletic clubs. But in all instances non-Minangkabaus were allowed to join and what began as subethnic sodalities quickly became neighborhood youth clubs. All failed, even as neighborhood clubs.

If the quality of groupness is comprised of status identity (reference) and involvement in mutual activities and goals (corporateness), then Malay ethnicity is rather more group-like in its urban than in its rural manifestations. If the intensity and constancy of these qualities of groupness are manifest in degree of exclusiveness or external boundedness, then Malay ethnicity is more group-like in its rural than in its urban manifestations. This last statement, of course, refers to the fact of more definite territorial delimitation of subethnic domains in the rural setting. In the rural setting, definite territorial delimitation is a constant characteristic of different

levels of identity. In the city, territoriality provides centric rather than bounded definition.

VILLAGES AND HAMLETS

In contrast with the viewpoint of State officials, inhabitants of Kuang and Kampong Bahru usually do not conceive of their respective "villages" as whole and distinct social units. Kuang inhabitants speak of particular areas such as "town" (*pekan*) or "seventeenth mile" (*batu tujoh belas*) or else they specify hamlets (*wilayah*) such as "forelock" (*gombak*), "coconut-half shell hill" (*bukit tempurong*), "water-buffalo field" (*padang kerbau*), and "faithful" (*setia*). Folk histories concern these smaller units rather than Kuang as a whole. The same is true to some extent with respect to the folk histories of Kampong Bahru.

Knowledgeable owners in Kampong Bahru speak of particular hamlets such as "citrus" (*limau*), "cooking-pot" (*periok*), "upper" (*atas*), "moved" (*pindah*), "swamp" (*paya*), "mosque" (*mesjid*), "sandy tip" (*ujong pasir*), and "sandalwood" (*chendana*). Many historically minded owners refer to the whole of Kampong Bahru but emphasize that it began as a federation of seven distinct villages which are now subdivisions or hamlets. But many of the younger owners and virtually all of the renters are ignorant of the hamlet names and they speak of Kampong Bahru as a whole in a general manner.

Hamlets in Kuang are more separate spatially than those of Kampong Bahru. But several are more or less contiguous and inhabitants disagree on their spatial boundaries. The problem of spatial definition is more pronounced in Kampong Bahru. Even owners who know the different hamlet names do not know the precise spatial limits of the hamlets. When compared to official municipal maps, their conceptions of hamlet boundaries were especially interesting and revealing. "Mistakes" always involved the idea that each hamlet had its own prayer house (*madrasah* or *surau*) and that the prayer house was more-or-less centrally located within the hamlet (*wilayah*). It was generally known that one hamlet, contiguous with the market, did not have a prayer house. Many informants argued that because it lacked a prayer house it was not really a part of Kampong Bahru, but just an ordinary part of the city. In another instance an old hamlet had been divided into two. The prayer house was located almost on the line of division but was clearly within the boundaries of one of the new hamlets. Inhabitants of this hamlet conceptually enlarged the territory of the hamlet so that it was more centrally located. Inhabitants of the other new hamlet consistently enlarged their territorial conception of their hamlet so as to include the prayer house. All who checked the official map expressed surprise and chagrin. I feel certain that it was my questions that

caused them to consider territorial boundaries of the hamlet, and that they normally conceive of the hamlet in centric terms—as the residential area surrounding a prayer house.

As mentioned above, informants in the rural locality seemed to be similarly perplexed when asked to describe the territorial boundaries of the different hamlets of Kuang. In Kuang, however, there were no official maps of hamlet boundaries. The main highway provided a facile east-west boundary, the school served as a point of north-south delineation, and the river was an obvious natural boundary between two hamlets. But there were instances of ambiguity.

After obtaining leaders' conceptions of the territorial boundaries of hamlets in Kuang, I began to take a census. Each household head was asked to specify the hamlet in which he lived. The claimed hamlet membership of household clusters in boundary areas was least predictable. There were even instances in which different households in the same cluster claimed membership in different hamlets. In specifying the hamlet in which they resided, these informants often ignored boundaries stipulated by the leaders' territorial descriptions. But these informants were knowledgeable and as well versed in landmarks and history as the leaders. Because house clusters tended to focus on prayer houses, I probably never would have noticed the ambiguity of hamlet boundary definitions without my previous experience in Kampong Bahru. Most houses in Kuang are clearly within one hamlet or another. Houses and house clusters are least dense in the boundary areas delineated by Kuang leaders. Individuals living in boundary areas specify hamlet membership according to which prayer house they happen to attend.

The importance of prayer houses as organizational features in Malay life is clear. Prayer houses are the local centers for celebration of the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulud*). They are places for food and refreshment in the evenings of the Fasting Month (*Bulan Puasa*). They are places of temporary rest and refuge for the wayfaring stranger. They are the sites of casual meetings of friends and emergency meetings of community significance. Prayer house committees are responsible for the collection of the annual tithe (*fitrah*), and they influence or manage its redistribution to the local poor. They collect contributions for special feasts. They collect dues for the mortuary service celebrated by the living and pay out the funeral expenses for the recently dead. No other institution, not even the government-sponsored ruling committee, affects everyday life so directly. But prayer house "congregations" may have members and even leaders who live outside the surrounding residential area.

The village (*kampong*) encompasses several hamlets (*wilayah*) and is to some extent defined by them. As the hamlet is defined by its focus on a prayer house, so the village is defined by its focus on a mosque (*mesjid*).

The centric definition of a *kampong* is two-fold. A kampong may be conceived of as the residential area of a mosque's congregation and as a federation of hamlets whose prayer house officials support a single mosque. In the past the British provided territorial boundaries for most kampongs, and these boundaries persist in matters of administration. But Malay inhabitants rarely acknowledge these precise territorial boundaries. As noted above, many owners in Kampong Bahru excluded one hamlet from the territory of the kampong because they knew it lacked a prayer house. Also, mosque officials insisted that the population of Kampong Bahru was nearly double my census figures. They were counting Malays who lived outside the official territorial boundaries of Kampong Bahru but whose hamlet prayer-houses supported the Kampong Bahru mosque.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSEHOLDS

The centric definition of Malay "groups" is more clear at the neighborhood level. Residents of Kampong Bahru and Kuang, in fact, recognize the basic idea of personal community (Henry 1951 and 1958), or personal network (Barnes 1954) in their category *jiran tetangga*. Ideally, one's *jiran tetangga* includes one's forty-four closest neighbors. Of course, no one bothers to make an actual count. The point here is that *jiran tetangga* as a group is egocentrically defined.

From the perspective of a given ego, *jiran* are members of an involvement group. One must invite them to feasts or allow them to contribute their services or goods to one's feasts. One may even exchange food with some of them. Not necessarily a kin group, although kin who are neighbors are included in it, the *jiran tetangga* as a group is most easily perceived by Westerners as a sort of non-familial kindred.

In Kuang, where almost everyone is at least distantly related affinally if not consanguineally, the *jiran tetangga* in many instances appears to be a kind of localized kindred. Virtually all inhabitants of Kuang own the house compounds in which they live. There is very little geographic mobility in the sense of moving from one house compound to another. Very few new people move into the locality. Mostly, recruitment is through birth and marriage. The total effect is that one is likely to have a life-long association with one's *jiran tetangga*—all the members of the four or five households in the same residential cluster.

In Kampong Bahru, geographic mobility is greater, even among owners. Persons invited to the last feast may have moved before the next feast. Moreover, the psychological effect is modified by the greater frequency of feasts in the urban setting, and the fact that inhabitants of one class, owners, give most of the feasts. The feasts verify the giver's old or new status in the locality. They are especially important in the urban setting, where social mobility is greatest. Renters give very few feasts because (1)

they have few resources; (2) as outsiders, they have no pertinent audience for the feast performance; and (3) they have lower status than owners and feel presumptuous in giving feasts. Renters are invited to feasts, of course. They may contribute their services, too. Young bachelor renters are often the servers of food at large *khenduris*.

An owner who gives a ritual feast (*khenduri*) must invite his renters and at least some of the neighboring owners. This audience, which varies in its membership from one feast to the next, represents the *jiran tetangga*. Its ideal definition as the forty-four nearest neighbors is not empty. Forty-four is a cosmologically important number. It represents harmony; and in this instance it provides the guiding theme in selection of guests from the numerous possibilities. Selection is necessary because the number of one's guests lacks significance unless the feast is well furnished. Not even a rich man's surplus is without limit. Some effort is made to select guests who are compatible with one another. Renters, friends, kinsmen with whom one has quarrelled recently may be forgotten in favor of new or potential renters, new friends, and long-neglected relatives. Careful effort will be made to reciprocate recent invitations and to shift to new sources of help in giving the feast. There is a genuinely pious concern for avoiding open conflict.

Khenduris to which one is especially obligated to invite *jiran tetangga* include: (1) *mengantar belanja* (engagement or giving of male dowry); (2) *bersanding* (wedding reception or sitting quietly together); (3) *chukur rambut* (first haircutting); (4) *menyambut bulan puasa* (welcoming the fasting month); (5) *arwah* (remembrance of the dead); (6) *hari raya puasa* (first day after the fasting month); (7) *niat* or *nazar* (successful vow); and (8) *selamat* (for safe undertaking). Other *kenduris* to which *jiran* must be invited but which are sex-specific include: (1) *sunat* (male—circumcision); (2) *melenggang perut* (female—massaging the abdomen in the seventh month of pregnancy); and (3) *lepasan kelahiran* (female—ritual cleansing after giving birth).

Audience, minor performers, and servants for these kinds of performances are drawn almost entirely from among the *jiran tetangga*. The saying, "*Jiran yang dekat lagi mustahak daripada saudara yang jauh*" ("Close neighbors are more important than distant relatives"), states the desirability of inviting neighbors before spatially or affectionally distant kin. It also states the importance of neighbors as a source of help in giving ritual feasts. Feasts are the most significant settings for *jiran tetangga* in Kampong Bahru and in Kuang. Rural neighbors who live in contiguous household compounds may work agricultural holdings in different areas of Kuang. Urban neighbors may work in different places and even send their children to different schools. The social and ritual obligations of neighbors to each other, celebrated in ritual feasts, do not necessarily carry over into economic

activities. There is the possibility, but not the expectation. This fact makes the greater frequency of ritual feasts and the lower frequency of bounded groups in the city less a paradox than at first it seems to Westerners.

Jiran tetangga constitute only "occasional groups"—analyzed from a Malay cultural category of social persons. The purpose or goal of settings in which *jiran tetangga* are involved is to verify status with an immediate audience. There is no other, more corporate, purpose. Centric definition, in which the personnel of any household's *jiran tetangga* are different from the personnel of any other household's, erodes conception of the *jiran tetangga* as a "real" group, i.e., one that has sociocentric definition. And the fact that any given host may easily shift his own conception of who are his *jiran tetangga* from one feast to the next, makes even network analysis difficult. Network analysis solves the problem of talking about groups without sociocentrically or constantly-fixed boundaries, but avoids the problem of "occasional groups" which are characterized by an extremely rapid turnover of personnel. But more of this later.

Recruitment of persons to a given individual's *jiran tetangga* or displacement from it is a frequent process in the city, in part, because of the high frequency of feast-giving in the city. It is much less frequent, but identical, in the country. Because the *jiran tetangga* is tied almost singularly to feast giving, one might suspect that the issue of rapid turnover of membership is somehow inappropriate. Other group-like features of Malay social organization, however, manifest high turnover of personnel. Situational ethnicity is one such manifestation and the seemingly chaotic composition of Malay households is another.

From the perspective of Western group sociology, recruitment of personnel to Malay kin-like aggregates seems either exotic or without logical rule. Murdock (1949:21, 45), for example, accepts the Western-coined Indonesian institution, *ambil anak* (literally, "take child"); and Djamour (1959:31) is reduced to asking her informants if their relatives (*saudara*) are "real" (*betul*). Flippant as these last remarks may seem, the problems they signify concern the pertinence of a major theme in group sociology (that the most primary of social groups have genealogical cement) to analysis of the empirical experience of Malay social organization.

Malay kinship terminology is Hawaiian in type. Unlike other types (Eskimo, Iroquois, Crow, Omaha, Sudanese), all Hawaiian type terms have meanings which may refer either to genealogical or to age-sex categories. As Linton (1936:122) pointed out almost forty years ago, the genealogical basis for the ascription of family statuses is likely to blind us to the fact that the physiological factors which may influence their content are almost exactly the same as those affecting the content of sex and age statuses. We have an ethnocentric bias for assuming genealogical content of terms used by household members to address and refer to each other.

In rural Malay households the impropriety of this bias is not too obvious because most persons are coincidentally related, even if distantly, through consanguineal and/or affinal ties. The incidence of absolutely untraceable relationship is sufficiently rare that we can with fair logic speak of the extension of kin terms to non-kin. This is not the situation in the city. Mobility and heterogeneity are too great. No wonder that the problem of the meaning of Malay "kin" terms arises only in substantial works on urban Malays (Djamour 1959; Provencher 1971). Use of the terminology between non-kin in the city is the key. But the situation is more profound than mere terminology.

Malays, urban and rural, adopt children and even other adults into their households without serious regard for genealogical relationships. As noted above, even Chinese are absorbed into households and into Malay ethnic identity. Malays as an ethnic aggregate, it should be remembered, have been at odds with the Chinese for some time. From the perspective of group sociology, their adopting and marrying Chinese is a bit exotic—like whites of the South marrying and adopting blacks or Irish Protestants marrying and adopting Irish Catholics. Malays adopt other Malays who are non-kin into their households even more frequently than they adopt non-Malays. Primary relatives (spouse, sibling, child, parent) leave Malay households very easily, too. Divorces are frequent in both rural and urban localities. Very small children and older female children usually remain with their mother or they go to live with some of their mother's relatives when there is a divorce. Older male children may remain with their father or go to live with some of their father's relatives. There is a definite bias in Malay folklore against step-parents who are the same sex as the stepchild. But there are no definite residence rules. Urban parents, protective of their adolescent daughters' virtue or pressed for living space, may send them to live with relatives in the country. In the country, they may be especially welcome additions to families who need additional personnel for baby-tending, cooking, rubber-tapping, or wet-rice horticulture. Increasingly, young adult females are finding work in the offices and factories of cities. They live together in households of four or more in traditional urban Malay localities, sharing the household budget and chores. Females are thought to be especially responsible and industrious—the opposite of males. Male adolescents often leave home, with their parents' tacit approval, in order to gain experience. Leaving home is not traumatic. It is the end point of a long process of alienation from their natal households. Rural youths come to the city. City youths go to other cities. The majority of them live in small rented households with one or two other bachelors. But many others buy room and board and become part of renter families which have two or more generations. Still others find places in the households of relatives or friends who are owners. Newly married couples, too, shift household

residence. Usually, the couple resides in or near the household of the wife's parents during the first months of marriage. Sometimes the couple finds an entirely new residence. If the groom's mother is not presently married (either widowed or divorced), the couple may move into her household (or she may move into theirs). Most grooms would be embarrassed to live in the same household as their fathers; some are not. The complex outcome of these factors of individual recruitment to and dislodgment from households is tremendous variety in Malay household composition.

If Malay households (*rumah tangga*) were to be typed according to the kin types found within them, one important type would have to be (using a term employed by Steward and Service) the "composite" type. I do not intend to say that many Malay households are chaotically assembled, only that they appear that way if one views them as groups composed of genealogically related individuals. But viewed as behavioral regions (Goffman 1959:106 and Barker 1968) in which persons interact according to culturally defined prerogatives of age and sex statuses, Malay households do not manifest great variety in their composition.

Whether one considers urban renter, urban owner, or rural households, about two-thirds of them are two-generation (adjacent generations) households with both male and female members. About sixty-eight percent of rural two-generation households, about sixty percent of urban renter two-generation households, and about forty-eight percent of urban owner two-generation households could be characterized as nuclear families. Other two-generation households lack one parent, include stepchildren or adopted children, include other relatives, or include non-relatives. It is the remaining one-third of the households in each instance which distinguish the urban renter, urban owner, and rural situations from each other. Urban renters and owners are most disparate in the generational distribution of their remaining third. Almost all of the remaining third of renter households are one generation in depth. Moreover, about seventy-five percent of these one-generation households are occupied either by young unmarried women or by bachelors. Almost all of the remaining third of owner households are three generations in depth. About sixty percent of these are melanges of kin and non-kin, and only about twenty-five percent could be characterized as stem families. Of the remaining third of rural households, about forty percent are single generation and sixty percent are three-generation households. Of the three-generation households, more than thirty-five percent are melanges of kin and non-kin, only about fifteen percent could be described as stem families, and the remainder are composed of different combinations of close kin types. Of the one-generation rural households, half are young couples, one quarter are young bachelor households, and one quarter are old female households.

Composite households result from a high turnover of personnel and

from seemingly uncoordinated processes of recruitment and displacement of personnel. This type of household (two-generation households which cannot be described as nuclear families and three-generation households which consist of mixtures of kin and non-kin) is frequent among rural villagers, urban renters, and urban owners. Obviously, composite households are most frequent among urban owners—the people most involved in traditional feasts. From the perspective of group sociology, of course, this is unexpected. It is unexpected because, generally, the latent function of ritual feasts is thought to be the celebration of group solidarity. The ambiguous character of composite household structure would be more consonant with loss or reduction of traditional behavioral patterns such as ritual feasts.

If the cultural basis of Malay households is age-sex rather than genealogical status, composite households are entirely traditional rather than products of disorganization. This perspective is consistent with Malay address terminology, which refers to non-kin as well as kin. Moreover, the household (*rumah tangga*) thus perceived becomes similar to other important aggregates such as neighborhood (*jiran tetangga*), hamlet (*wilayah*), village (*kampong*), and ethnic identity (*bangsa*). All of these aggregates are important features of Malay social organization. But none is a really tightly bounded group except coincidentally, as when participants in a particular aggregate happen to be the same persons on almost all occasions or when participants in a particular aggregate happen to be genealogically related.

VOLUNTARY AGGREGATES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Voluntary aggregates with one-time special functions are notable features of Malay social organization. Malays refer to the processes by which such aggregates are constituted as *tolong-menolong* ("help") or *gotong-royong* ("mutual assistance"). Usually each participant has immediate and pragmatic reasons for joining one of these special occasions of work. Participation is not rationalized as being altruistic.

A voluntary aggregate requires charismatic leadership and an immediate problem which can be easily and quickly solved. The building and maintenance of small roads, playing fields, public buildings, and drainage ditches are appropriate kinds of problems. But even these problems are usually solved by other means because of the difficulty of finding enough participants directly affected. Voluntary aggregates have never been important in the more wealthy portions of Kampong Bahru and they have had few successes in Kuang. They are most important as features of organization in the poorest areas of Kampong Bahru and in the squatter areas adjacent to Kampong Bahru. These areas are least affected by government administrative services which offer alternative modes of solving problems.

Voluntary aggregates rarely evolve into voluntary associations. Such organizations as the Kuang irrigation society, Javanese cultural association, Malay business association, Malay sections of Chinese Triad Societies, and various local chapters of political parties were initially founded as associations. The near absence of associations in Kuang and their abundance in Kampong Bahru might be seen as differential acculturation. All are formally organized on British or Chinese models. Informally, however, all manifest Malay conceptions of organization.

Without detailing variations in the formal and informal organization of these associations, we can note their similarity to group-like phenomena reviewed above.

Local chapters of political parties have formal membership rolls and formally designated officials. General membership meetings, however, are usually attended only by party officials and people who aspire to official positions. Common members, although their numbers are mentioned, are not apparent. Informally, local political organization is not based on general membership but on the followings of charismatic leaders. These leaders depend on officials in higher echelons of the party for patronage for themselves and their followers. Local charismatic leaders change patrons whenever it is advantageous. They sometimes change from one political party to another in the process and take the votes they control with them. Political parties thus have centric definition which is based on leaders, just as hamlets and villages have centric definition based on prayer houses and mosques.

The formal organization of Malay gangs is an extension of that of Chinese Triad Societies to which they are attached. In the one instance of completely separate organization, the short-lived Jesse James Geng of Kuala Lumpur, details of formal organization except the name were identical with the organization of a Chinese Triad Society. Ordinarily, however, only the gang leader is a fully initiated member of the Triad Society. A local "treasurer" for the Triad Society, he recruits members to his own gang and initiates them with an attenuated ceremony. The life-long pledge of aid to other members and the oath of secrecy is most binding on him. Other members of the gang come and go, most of them joining the gang while adolescent and leaving after becoming adult. They fear discipline from the Society less than does the leader. He remains—the focal member of a centrically defined organization. In effect, Malay sections of Chinese Triad Societies are organized in the same fashion as local branches of political parties.

The Malay business association in Kampong Bahru is patterned after Chinese business associations. Mostly, it attempts to protect Malay merchants from extortion. In this respect it has a superficial resemblance to Malay gangs, which also sell protection. Gangs, however, tend to specialize in one illegal activity or another such as extortion, ticket scalping, or burglary. The Malay business association has more general and legitimate

interests, such as obtaining merchandise at favorable prices for its members and supporting members through customer referrals, although it has not been especially successful in its efforts. A small organization with shifting membership, its continued existence has depended on the leadership of one man who is immediately identified by all who have heard of the association and its activities.

The only non-political association in Kuang, the irrigation society, was founded in the 1930s through sponsorship of the District Office of the state government. It ceased functioning in the late 1940s. In 1965, the District Officer was interested in resurrecting it, but there were many technical problems. Most members of the irrigation society owed back dues when the society collapsed. The society needed funds to pay old debts and to buy equipment. Many who owed back dues had died and most of the others refused to pay. Extension and major repair of the irrigation system had been taken over by the State Division of Irrigation and Drainage. Minor maintenance had been performed by persons in immediate need of water. The need for resurrecting the irrigation society did not seem pressing to most Kuang inhabitants. Although inoperative, the irrigation society holds promise of being more group-like than previously mentioned associations.

The Javanese cultural association is a real group. Its membership does not have a high turn-over rate. Members are much involved in association activities. Officials gain and lose their positions without endangering the existence of the organization. There is no sense in which this association has centric definition. It is a bounded group. There are several possible explanations for this anomaly. Distinctive language and low subethnic status may have provided impetus for increased solidarity among the Javanese as manifested in the cultural association. Also, traditional Javanese social organization may be more group-like than traditional Malay social organization.

Characteristically, in any case, voluntary aggregates and associations have centric rather than bounded definition. Charismatic leaders are the focal points of organization. The more enduring quality of the associations, in contrast to the short life of voluntary aggregates, suggests that they are corporate. Mednick's (1961) use of the term "corporation sole" to describe structure in which corporateness is vested in social positions rather than in groups seems especially apropos with regard to Malay associations. His suggestion comes from experience with the Maranao of the southern Philippines, who are culturally similar to Malays.

PERSONAL NETWORKS

Because Malay aggregates so frequently have centric definition and therefore may appear to be informally constituted, it is important to note the structure of informal social organization. Network analysis is a deductive mode which in its structural implication bears some resemblance to Malay

aggregates. Voluntary aggregates and associations may be seen as networks which have fixed social positions (leadership) as focal points. Other aggregates such as the village and the hamlet have fixed spatial points of focus (religious structure). Still another aggregate, the neighborhood, does not have a fixed focal point. Potentially, according to its cultural description, the neighborhood varies in definition from one household to the next. "Personal community" (Henry 1958) or "personal network" (Barnes 1954) involves a shifting centric definition which varies from one person to another. It is of interest here because it provides a structural means of viewing the informal aggregate of persons which constitute the individual's social universe. This a priori category, the personal network, has no explicit counterpart in Malay culture, but it resembles Malay aggregates in general and the Malay neighborhood (*jiran tetangga*) in particular.

Qualitative characteristics of personal networks in Kuang and Kampong Bahru were gathered from personal diaries by twenty rural and thirty-three urban informants. Further description was obtained from informants who were asked to identify as many of the surrounding households as possible by reference to name, age, sex, and other personal characteristics of household members. Their descriptions were immediately checked against census cards for each household in the surrounding area. Two or three persons drawn from each different age and sex category of different kinds of households constituted the informant sample—a sample too complex for statistical purposes.

From the Malay perspective, acquaintances (*kenalan*) fill the outer spaces in one's personal universe. They are largely untested socially. Food and drink, symbolic of sociability, may have been consumed with them, but it was probably prepared by a third party. They are within the pale of social consideration. One owes them greeting or counter-greeting, recognition of their prior position in front of a service window, and help in case of emergency. Persons beyond even the weak ties of acquaintanceship are owed very little, unless one is within their setting. This is true whether such persons are attempting to gain the attention of a clerk at an outside service window of a government office or attempting to survive an accident on a public street.

Friends (*kawan* or *orang biasa*) are persons with whom one has consumed food or drink many times. They are not confidants. One owes them courtesy, either familiar or formal, appropriate to given behavioral regions.

Close friends (*kawan rapi*) occupy the inner circle of one's personal network. One exchanges food and drink with them regularly. One owes support to close friends. But the support is mostly emotional and social rather than economic. Economic support must be directly reciprocated.

Rural adults have very large personal networks. Most in Kuang can identify members of more than two hundred households in the village area. Except for occasional close relatives living elsewhere and a few friends in

Kuala Lumpur, members of one's personal network live in Kuang. There is virtually no sex difference in the size of personal communities. Children had smaller networks, but adolescent personal networks are as large as those of adults. Personal networks in the rural locality rarely include more than two or three close friends (*kawan rapi*) or more than a dozen friends (*kawan*). Almost all social spaces in personal networks are occupied by acquaintances (*kenalan*).

Personal networks in the urban locality are more variable. Superficially, those of young males living in bachelor households are smallest. Usually, a bachelor is acquainted with members of no more than six or seven households in his immediate neighborhood. In addition, he may be acquainted with a dozen persons at his place of work. Most members of his personal network are about his age and are male. He cannot casually date girls other than *joget* dancers and prostitutes. Courting a girl he is likely to marry requires time and effort and previous commitment. To be proper, it must be done in the presence of responsible persons who may criticize both his motivation and his technique. Or it must be entirely secret, which is an equally complex matter. His leisure hours in public are usually spent in the company of one or two other young males. They are *kawan rapi*. Their relationship is the most intense of all Malay relationships.

Young unmarried men and women initially attempt to maintain acquaintanceship and friendships in their home localities. Males who have not yet succeeded in finding a good job are most interested in maintaining a place in their home setting. They return on weekends or at monthly intervals and take care to attend ritual feasts given in their home communities. Those who have succeeded in Kuala Lumpur rarely visit their home communities except on holidays to visit their parents at the end of the fasting month (*Hari Raya Bulan Puasa*). In effect, they have abandoned most members of their former personal networks. Their networks in the urban setting are usually correspondingly larger than those of their less successful contemporaries. Young women usually maintain personal networks in their native localities and develop fairly large networks in their new surroundings.

Young renter couples with no children have personal networks which are somewhat larger than those of males living in bachelor households. Both may attempt to maintain *kawan rapi* relationships with same-sex individuals who remain unmarried, but such relationships tend to deteriorate because marriage revises one's status upward into the adult world and undermines the sense of equality upon which emotionally intense *kawan rapi* relationships are based. Constricted through this circumstance, one's personal network expands through partial merger with a spouse's.

Members of renter households consisting of a couple and school-age children tend to have acquaintances in a dozen or more households in the neighborhood. Each member of the household tends to assimilate the per-

sonal networks of other members into his own personal community. Middle-aged renters with nearly adult children as well as school-age children usually know members of twenty to thirty households in the neighborhood. Their acquaintanceship "scores" are comparable to those of owners. Renters with large families who remain in the same household for several years have the greatest number of acquaintances of all renters. Long resident renters become better acquainted with owner households than with renter households in the neighborhood. They are drawn into the feast-giving networks of owners. Except for operators of local general stores (*kedai*), who may know members of several hundred households, Kampong Bahru owners are acquainted with a dozen to forty households in their neighborhoods.

The personal networks of urban Malays include many acquaintances and friends whom they know from non-residential contexts. Acquaintanceship outside the residential locality is extremely well developed among school children. Numbers of school acquaintances range from about twenty to sixty (depending mostly on class size) for individual Kampong Bahru children. Usually, no more than four or five of these acquaintances will live in the child's own neighborhood. School friendship often develops into *kawan rapi* relationship.

Males who work outside the community usually have few occupational acquaintances if they work in an office or team situation and are junior in rank. Those of high rank have many acquaintances. The proclaimed number of occupational acquaintances for individual office workers and other team workers ranges from four to five to more than fifty.

Businessmen and salesmen have extremely numerous acquaintances (*tiada terhisabkan*—"beyond calculation") as customers and as suppliers. Malay stallholders in the local market claimed recognition and knowledge of one hundred to two hundred occasional customers in addition to fifty to one hundred more or less regular customers.

Less than twenty-five percent of urban women work outside the residential community. An even smaller percentage of owner women works. Women who stay home, however, have more thorough knowledge of neighboring households than men. Members of households with more women have larger personal communities. Owner households, on the average, have more women than renter households. This, along with the greater generation depth and larger size of owner households, contributes to the larger personal communities of owners.

Probably even the total personal communities of owners do not rival those of Kuang residents in size. The numbers of *kawan rapi* "close friends" and *kawan* "friends" are approximately the same. What varies is the number of acquaintances (*kenalan*). Urban Malays probably see many more people every day than rural Malays, but they do not interact with them or learn their names. Such people are beyond the pale of social consideration until

one enters their setting or they enter one's own setting and there is some immediate pressure for interaction. Mentally but not socially recognized, they remain strangers. Present each day or at longer intervals in a public region, perhaps the experienced regularity of their past appearance weighs less heavily than the possibility that as strangers they will not appear again in the highly mobile urban setting.

In the urban locality, of course, geographical mobility is sufficiently great to effect fairly rapid change in personal networks. But it is not the only factor. Even unaffected by geographical mobility, personal networks change. Best friends may suddenly become worst enemies and pass from personal community into hostile environment. Best friends neglected become just friends and in time mere acquaintances. Acquaintances or friends may become best friends. Similar changes occur in the personal networks of rural Malays. Members of personal networks are recruited and displaced as the individual's fortunes vary. Persons recruited to one household member's network are in time recruited to the networks of other members. But, of course, one member's best friend may be another's acquaintance. Qualitatively, the household is not precisely equivalent to the person as a focal point of structure. But choices made by each member of the household affect the size of personal networks of other members. Thus a neighborhood, defined centrically according to a given household, is a quantitatively simple but qualitatively complex aggregate. Neither quantitative nor qualitative dimensions are static.

The concept of personal network here illuminates by complicating rather than simplifying. Through its use, we avoid simple but negative descriptions which are inevitable when static group concepts are applied to unbounded aggregates. The fact that the same persons are not consistently involved in a given aggregate, that a given participant's status varies according to the different viewpoints of other participants in an aggregate, and that "membership" and "status" change frequently and according to perspective, are pinpointed as analytical problems.

It is clear that recruitment to Malay aggregates and displacement from them are a matter of personal choice or option rather than a matter of rules made by the aggregate. These personal choices or options remain open. No choice is final—actually or ideally. Moreover, not all segments of an individual's personal network are pertinent at a given time. When, for example, a Malay changes his subethnic identity according to the demands of a specific situation, temporarily he has forsaken at least some communication and behavioral modes of other segments of his personal community. Situational subethnicity is only one, most dramatic, instance of the fact that an individual Malay's personal network or any portion of it suffers the same fluctuation between pertinence and insignificance as any other aggregate. Malay aggregates appear to be temporary outcomes of a number of personal

decisions, whether one views them from the group or from the network perspective. Can individual behavioral conformity derive from sanctions imposed by such fragile bits of structure? Surely not.

INTERACTION AS STRUCTURE

Malay society lacks certain aspects of behavior conformity found in societies with tightly bounded groups. Leaders at the village level and below have little authority. Economic bargains are not contracts guaranteed by society-wide sanctions. Even rights and obligations of close kinship are situational. But from the Western perspective conformity to the rule of courtesy is almost absolute. Character (*budi*), verbal language (*bahasa*), and courtesy (*budi bahasa*) are inextricably united as aspects of effective communication with other individuals. Courtesy is learned in the same fashion as language in general. The rewards for appropriate courtesy are the same as for effective language. They consist of resources and respect gained from other individuals towards whom one directs his performance. The source of reward for conformity is personal (dyadic) or minimally social (triadic) rather than societal. Western conformity is rewarded or guaranteed by groups. Reward for conformity is ideally societal. In some instances, such as in ward politics of large Western cities, rewards are personal or minimally social; but they are then perceived as manifestations of "corruption."

The ultimate goal or reward in the Malay social system is higher status. Economic success is only a means towards achieving higher status. Of course, the same can be said of the Western social system. But Malays rarely confuse the means with the goal. Westerners usually do. Important here is the fact that consideration of status-rank is central to the structure of formal Malay courtesy.

In formal or "refined" (*halus*) Malay courtesy, the two basic assumptions are that participants in the situation are of different rank and that lower status participants must refer to the difference. There are many bases for ranking, including age, achievement (in religion, education, and leadership), and inheritance of royal titles. Codes which express differences in rank include address terminologies, greeting gestures, sitting postures, and seating arrangements. Other codes which do not directly signal status-rank differences but which signal that the occasion involves the display of status include: formal offering of food and drink, segregation of the sexes, and wearing of formal traditional clothing. This variety of courtesy is appropriate to particular behavioral circumstance such as the region of the front room or verandah, the setting of a ritual feast, the presence of a high ranking participant, or the presence of an unfamiliar participant or observer. Formal courtesy is more frequent in the urban than in the rural community because owners can afford many ritual feasts which affirm or raise their status and because high mobility insures the presence of unfamiliar participants.

Another variety of courtesy is characterized by great informality. Reference to rank is conspicuous by its absence. Pronouns and nicknames rather than address terms are utilized. Verbal greetings refer to personal functions such as "have you eaten?" (*sudah makan?*) or "have you bathed?" (*sudah mandi?*). Gesture and posture have no status significance, and clothing is extremely casual. This is *kasar* or "informal" behavior. It is appropriate in the backregion of the house—especially the kitchen. It is the behavioral mode in situations where all participants including observers are very familiar with each other. Probably no more frequent in the urban community, *kasar* behavior is more easily perceived in an urban setting because of greater population density and the lesser effectiveness of aural boundaries.

The most complete expressions of *halus* and *kasar* behavior are in their appropriate regions and settings—respectively, ritual feasts in the front room and breakfast in the kitchen. Males are associated with the most ornate expressions of *halus* behavior and females are associated with the most informal expressions of *kasar* behavior.

Courtesy in more public regions such as roadways, the market, or coffee shops is compromised, but it is predictable. Formal address terms and formal greeting gestures are exchanged between acquaintances and friends, and even between close friends and familiars if non-familiar participants are present. When unfamiliar witnesses and participants are not present in otherwise public places, informal greeting and address forms are proper. When acquaintances, friends, or close friends are lacking in a non-Malay region, no rule of Malay courtesy is binding. Inside government buildings and in modern stores, the rules of English courtesy may apply. It is in these places, for example, that one may hear regular participants (clerks and salesmen) speaking to each other in Malay but using English pronouns (which are perceived as "democratic" without being overly familiar).

Structure is quite evident here. It consists of particular behavioral styles which are appropriate to particular regions (areas), settings (events), and witnesses (participants). The structure is empirical in the sense that Malays explicitly recognize it. Moreover, Malay aggregates can be easily described in terms of this structure.

Personal networks are not explicitly recognized in Malay language. They fit, however, into the structure of interaction. Acquaintances (*kenalan*) at the outer edges of personal network are social witnesses whose presence requires formal behavior. Friends (*kawan*) interact according to the appropriateness of the region, but they rarely enter each other's backregions where informal behavior is appropriate. Close friends (*kawan rapi*) and members of the same household interact in the informal style when their behavior is not witnessed by an unfamiliar person. That their personal networks overlap to a high degree is consonant with informal behavior, which is an expression of equality and near identity.

Other Malay aggregates consist of participants in particular regions, settings, and definitions of courtesy. Members of a household are social participants in a single kitchen. The basis of their relationship is personal compatibility. Persons who do not fit in leave, and those who do are welcome to join or remain. That the kitchen is the focal region of the household is expressed in many ways. For one thing, the kitchen is the place where household members eat and spend leisure time. It is the most informal region of the house. Unfamiliar persons do not enter. Usually adjacent to the bathing area, it is at ground level, while the rest of the house has a higher floor level. The kitchen is the one place in the house where one may wear shoes. And it is the place where women sit during ritual feasts.

The profane character of the kitchen is especially clear when it is compared to the front room. One must remove his shoes to enter the front room. It is the place of prayer, of honored visitors, of ritual feasts, and of men. One's neighbors (*jiran tetangga*) attend ritual feasts in the front room.

Hamlets and villages, too, are aggregates of persons who occasionally gather in special behavioral regions (the prayer house and the mosque) to participate in special events or settings. Islamic prayer is more important as a behavioral routine in the prayer house than in the front room. Ritual feasts are correspondingly less important. But formal behavior is in order. The prayer house is, in effect, a sort of front room for the hamlet. It is a place of prayer, a place of rest for wayfaring strangers, and the place where the ritual feast of the Prophet is celebrated.

Friday sermon and prayer comprise behavioral routines within the mosque. Before entering and after leaving, behavioral routines are formal. But food is not appropriate in the mosque, just as prayer is not appropriate in the kitchen. The village center is not a place of personal intimacy. Persons do not relate directly to each other. Relationship derives from the relationship of each to a Third: Allah.

Third persons are important to the structure of Malay interaction and of Malay aggregates. Whether behavioral style between two persons is formal or informal often depends on their relationship to a third person who may witness their behavior. In aggregates which have charismatic leaders, followers cooperate not because of relationships between themselves, but because of the relationship between each follower and the leader. This is especially clear from the fact that a most important activity of leaders is to effect reconciliation between two quarreling followers. Such reconciliations are manifest in feasts which the leader provides and which the contestants attend, of course. Local leaders may be followers themselves and, again, each relates to a higher leader rather than to a peer. The goal of a leader is the same as the general goal of Malays: higher status. One can trade resources for respect. It is better to look upward than straight across. Except

for rare intimacy, that is the Malay way. Simmel (1950) would have understood immediately.

Finally, I think it is clear from the Malay instance that "loose structure" is non-group structure. Bounded groups cannot be assumed. Their existence or their desirability as analytical structure must be proved. The same is true of networks. Interaction analysis is a safer beginning because it is closer to the empirical experience of behavior. Then, as Boissevain suggests, interaction analysis may be translated into network analysis from which an analysis of groups can be derived, if they exist. I think this is an important procedure especially for urban anthropologists, whatever the source of their data, because group structure usually encloses so little of urban behavior.

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